

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application based on the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 22-34 and 55 and 56 are present in the application. Claims 55 and 56 are amended. Claims 22 and 55 are independent.

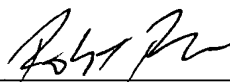
Claims 55 and 56 have been amended to incorporate the recitation of "diffracting the light through a masking aperture having a half tone diffraction pattern of dithered pixels patterned for distributing the light into two or more zones." Applicant submits that this amendment places claims 55 and 56 into condition for allowance as the amended claims now contain the recitation that the Examiner deemed to be patentable in claim 22. In view of the foregoing, the claims are now believed to be in form for allowance, and such action is hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, he is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached Appendix is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made".

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure: Appendix

APPENDIX

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

The claims are amended as follows:

55. (Amended) A method for controlling on-axis and off-axis illumination of a photomask comprising [the steps of]:

directing a beam of light of a selected wavelength toward a pupil of an illumination system;

passing the beam of light through a fly's eye lens located near the pupil;

diffracting the light through a masking aperture having a half tone diffraction pattern of dithered pixels patterned for distributing the light into one or more zones to form a pattern of illumination intensity in the one or more zones wherein each zone has a shape corresponding to shapes selected from the group consisting of ellipses, square rings, stepped squares and combination thereof.

56. (Amended) The method of claim 55 further comprising diffracting the light beam through a masking aperture having a half tone diffraction pattern of dithered pixels patterned for distributing the light into one or more zones to form one or more additional patterns of light intensity selected from the group consisting of circles, squares, rectangles and circular rings.